

Meeting Minutes

Environmental Enhancement Committee Meeting

November 06, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Three Options for Public Participation:

In Person Option:

1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA

Big Sur Conference Room – 10th Floor of Elihu Harris State Building
Check in to security on the 1st floor and take the elevator to the 10th floor

Virtual Option using MS Teams:

Meeting link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/567ddd20-5366-486e-9fea-ea1350d6c786@f14b3101-b7c2-4955-862f-8895ad78a803>

Meeting ID: 215 525 275 491 Passcode: WBJSY5

Telephonic Option:

+1 949-943-1202, 32241083# United States, Irvine

Phone conference ID: 322 410 83#

The meeting began at 10:05 am, and all three EEC members were in attendance; Heather Geldart, Amy Hutzal, and Stephanie Tom Coupe. This was a hybrid meeting; the public was invited to attend and either submit comments or questions via MS Teams or in person, or by phone. Minor technical issues with access to the Teams meeting occurred, but appeared to resolve by 10:06.

Cristina Perez, the Coordinator of the Environmental Enhancement Fund from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Office of Spill Prevention and Response (CDFW-OSPR), introduced herself and welcomed everyone in attendance. She confirmed people online were able to access the material and acknowledged that some were in attendance on the telephone. She covered items on the agenda and how the meeting will run. She shared slides via MS Teams that were also visible in the room, and described suggestions for how to submit or make comments including in the chat, using the audio on MS Teams after a raised hand button, or on the telephone audibly. Each of the three EEC member introduced themselves.

Cristina gave some background on the Environmental Enhancement Fund (EEF), showed a slide with the history of grants made through the EEF, and also showed the habitat types funded over the entire history of EEF in a pie chart. She then covered the last request for proposals (RFP) that awarded grants, and what it resulted in funding. She covered the recent funding increase that the program has experienced, and then the Budget Act of 2024 including the increased spending authority and encumbrance period given to this fund, along with extended liquidation period to 2031. She discussed the option to increase the funding to the full spending authority

but suggested a maximum of \$7.5 million to leave a buffer amount in the fund. She confirmed, again, that online attendees could see her slides.

Cristina covered the 2024 RFP and the 103 applications that were received, along with the Technical Review Committee (TRC) process that identified the top 20 project proposals among them. She then explained the meaning of mean scores and mean rank, and that another proposal was included to send a total of 21 proposals to the 2nd tier TRC review. She paused and asked if anyone had questions about that process. She then discussed the focus of the presentation and then covered the evaluation criteria. She displayed the top 21, then highlighted the top 10 which were the same in both ranks and mean scores, but in different order for some.

Stephanie asked if changing the funding amount changes the number of projects funded, Cristina said she'd cover the same 10 in the slides but it does change how many projects could be funded. She then showed and reviewed the top ten projects in order by mean score:

- Enhancing Dune Habitat and Ecosystem Function at Northern Monterey County State Parks
- Riparian Restoration at the TNC Prairie Pacific Property, Santa Paula
- Pismo State Beach Foredune Restoration and Improvement Project
- Shaahnaa' Lhook' Land Back and Salmon Stream Protection
- Upper Tyron Creek Habitat Restoration - Phase 1
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project
- Restoration of Sausal Creek Headwaters
- Restoring Ecosystem Health and Resilience at Anacapa Island, Channel Islands National Park
- Enhancement of Coastal Salt Marsh and Associated Rare Species in and Adjacent to the San Diego Bay NWR
- Improving Habitat and Biodiversity of Seabirds on Ano Nuevo Island

Amy asked what order she was presenting them in, Cristina said means score order. Heather asked if the Enhancing Dune Habitat and Ecosystem Function at Northern Monterey County State Parks fulfilled their grant commitments, and Cristina said that they had done so. Heather also asked if any vulnerable species were highlighted as benefiting in that project, there were several that Cristina and Stephanie mentioned as benefiting from this project.

On the Pismo State Beach Foredune Restoration and Improvement Project, Heather asked about cost share and special status species that benefit. Cristina answered both questions.

On the Shaahnaa' Lhook' Land Back and Salmon Stream Protection project, Amy asked if there had been an appraisal for this property. Jeff, the applicant was in attendance, and clarified that no appraisal had been done, but that an informed estimated price was presented. He also clarified that there is money in the budget of their application to do the Department of General Services (DGS) process with appraisal.

On the Upper Tyron Creek Habitat Restoration - Phase 1 project, Heather commented that it is agricultural land and asked if the bridge was intended for future public use, and Cristina clarified that no, it is private land and the proposal did not state any intention of making this a public area.

Amy asked about who owns the land for Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project. A public representative in attendance clarified the land ownership status. Amy asked about how they intended to control invasive spartina. The same public member clarified that they'd follow regional guidance on how to control it but that the spartina problem was not too bad at that location. On the Restoration of Sausal Creek Headwaters, Stephanie asked who funded the previous project. A person in attendance answered that it was a private foundation and a private individual with some limited assistance from the City of Oakland.

On Restoring Ecosystem Health and Resilience at Anacapa Island, Channel Islands National Park, Heather asked about what vulnerable special species were not highlighted. Ian Sexton, on Teams, raised a hand and answered by highlighting some of the seabirds and pollinators there. Heather asked who is funding the active restoration on-going there now. The same Teams attendee answered that National Park Service, and Montrose Trustee Council and Ventura County have been funders.

On the Improving Habitat and Biodiversity of Seabirds on Ano Nuevo Island, Heather asked if they completed the previously EEF funded project, and Cristina answered that yes they did.

Cristina shared a spreadsheet on screen and online that listed the top projects with dollars requested for funding. Heather asked if any of the projects offered that they could accept partial funding. Cristina said that many projects did indicate that.

Stephanie asked if the committee should take up the issue of the funding limit that they wish to select as a first vote. Amy liked that idea, and Amy motioned to increase the funding selections in this meeting to \$7,500,000. Stephanie seconded that. A vote occurred, and the motion passed unanimously.

A request was made by Cristina for any public comments. A public member from East Bay Municipal Utility District spoke in favor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project. Scott Gregory also spoke in favor of this project and highlighted that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been completed for this project. Another public member present also spoke in favor of this project. Two representatives of a local representative, Mia Bonta, in Oakland, spoke in favor of the same project. Jeff Conti, a representative from Trust for Public Land, spoke in favor of the Shaahnaa' Lhook' Land Back and Salmon Stream Protection project. Lisa Giordano, a public member present, spoke in favor of the Restoration of Sausal Creek Headwaters project in Oakland.

On Teams, a comment from Wolfy Rouble from Butte County Resource Conservation District, spoke in support of the Process based project from Park Fire that ranked #11. She mentioned that their project is scalable if there are funds left over after funding the larger projects. Rachael McLellan advocated for the Escuela Ranch

Water Resilience and Streamflow Enhancement Project, located on Cal Poly Ranch land. Michelle Hester spoke in favor of Improving Habitat and Biodiversity of Seabirds on Ano Nuevo Island project and mentioned it is scalable. A member of the public attending on Teams representing California Institute of Environmental Studies spoke in favor of Restoring Ecosystem Health and Resilience at Anacapa Island, in the Channel Islands National Park, and mentioned that project is scalable. Josephine Guzman, a representative from Oakland District 7 Council member Treva Reid spoke in favor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project. Bernhard Warzecha spoke in favor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project as well and mentioned that invasive spartina is something that they will work with CDFW and local advisors on.

A member in attendance, Ildiko Polony, spoke in favor of Mt. Sutro Creek project in San Francisco and mentioned that for \$186,000 they could get the design would get them a lot closer to implementation if they could at least get that.

Cristina checked for any remaining comments. Finding none she thanked everyone for their comments and then transitioned to the EEC for deliberations. Heather had questions based on the public comments that they had heard, asking about the Park Fire project rank. Cristina said it had ranked number 11.

Deliberation began among the committee members. Amy suggested staying with the top 21 projects for funding selections. Heather motioned to fund the top three projects. Amy seconded that motion. Stephanie asked about adjusting funding for the top ranked project. Amy suggested instead of a motion, that they include the top 3 in the mix of what gets funded. Amy expressed that she supports land back but things could fall apart due to an appraisal not already have been completed, so that she has some concern with the project. Stephanie expressed that she had concerns about the appraisal not being completed yet for this also. Amy suggested that they could fund the appraisal portion of the project. A public member mentioned that the project is scalable and that the amount is an informed estimate based on comparable properties, but not an appraisal. Amy suggested that they fund 50% of that project. Deliberation continued with a focus on options for partial funding for some of the Alameda projects. One of the public representatives from the MLK marsh projects said it is scalable, and that \$2 million would go a long way toward completing the design, but not complete it. The Sausal Creek representative clarified that partial funding would be helpful and that this area has been under resourced historically. Deliberation of options, including partial funding options, continued.

Heather Geldart motioned to accept the displayed on the spreadsheet, containing the projects and funding amounts listed below. Stephanie Tom Coupe seconded the motion, the vote occurred and was unanimously accepted.

The projects that will be funded, and the approved amounts, are:

- Enhancing Dune Habitat and Ecosystem Function at Northern Monterey County State Parks, for \$432,630.50
- Riparian Restoration at the TNC Prairie Pacific Property, Santa Paula, for \$1,239,468

- Pismo State Beach Foredune Restoration and Improvement Project, for \$984,263.08
- Shaahnaa' Lhook' Land Back and Salmon Stream Protection, for \$765,000
- Upper Tryon Creek Habitat Restoration - Phase 1, for \$787,998.60
- Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Tidal Wetland Restoration Project, for \$2,000,000
- Restoration of Sausal Creek Headwaters, for \$407,939.30
- Restoring Ecosystem Health and Resilience at Anacapa Island, Channel Islands National Park, for \$882,801

There was a discussion about applying the extra spending authority to partially funded projects, but a decision was made to deal with that in a future EEC meeting.

Cristina closed by announcing that all applicants will be notified of the EEC decisions, and awarded projects will be contacted for beginning the grant process.

Cristina thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting 12:29 pm.